2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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252 of dishes and enamel basins, and each is covered with a basket. Then the housewife hands them one by one to waiting children, saying, 'For X', 'For Z', and the little boys and girls hurry off to different huts or *nsaka* in the village carrying their loads on their heads.

264 During meal-times a different form of grouping displays itself. The unit of food preparation does not coincide exactly with the unit of consumption, although both exceed the limits of the individual family. The first division of the community at meal-times is along the lines of sex. Men and women eat separately. Even husband and wife never share a meal, except at night in the privacy of their own hut. It is considered shameful for the two sexes to eat together, and the Bemba women back from the mines who occasionally copy the European custom of joint meals, usually do so out of bravado, and are spoken of in bated breath. ● [832] To say, 'She eats with men' is almost equivalent to calling a woman a prostitute in all but the urban areas, and the efforts of some educationalists to introduce family meals as part of 'Christian family life' have been hotly criticized by older natives.

This grouping of the sexes at meal-times is further subdivided on the basis of age, kinship, and friendship. Nobody eats alone. Each belongs to a set of his contemporaries who regularly share meals together. The grouping by age is not absolute, but is customary and follows the people's inclinations. In a small village it is usual for all the *bakalamba*—'big men'—to eat together at their own *nsaka* or to group together in turn on one of their respective verandas. In a larger settlement there may be two or three such groups of old men usually united by close ties of kinship. The young men eat at the village shelter where their food is regularly brought them. [602] It may not be possible for all the young married men of a village to eat round one dish, for the in-law avoidances, still punctiliously observed among the Bemba, prevent a husband from feeding with any of his wife's relatives, real or classificatory. Hence it is customary to find round the village *nsaka* at least two groups—the young men born in the village and the outsiders who have come into the community to marry their sisters or cross-cousins. When the porridge arrives they form into two rings back to back round their own dishes. In larger villages there is a greater choice of possible associates, and personal friendship and geographical propinquity help to fix the choice. Even where the *nsaka* system